

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A method of screening for a compound that modulates viral assembly and maturation comprising the steps of:
 - maintaining viral structural protein in a soluble form;
 - triggering assembly of said viral structural protein;
 - contacting said viral structural protein with a candidate compound or a control compound that does not inhibit viral assembly; and
 - monitoring viral assembly, wherein an increase or decrease of viral assembly in the presence of said candidate compound compared to control compound indicates said candidate compound promotes or inhibits viral assembly respectively.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said viral assembly and maturation is HIV-1 assembly and maturation.
3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said viral structural protein is elected from the group consisting of matrix protein, capsid protein, nucleocapsid protein and gag protein of HIV-1.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said viral structural protein is maintained in a soluble form through the use of an anti-aggregation agent ~~pertubant~~.
5. (canceled)
6. (canceled)
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein said anti-aggregation agent ~~pertubant~~ is GuHCl.
8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said GuHCl is in a concentration of from about 1 M to about 6 M.
9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said assembly of viral protein is triggered by rapid removal of an anti-aggregation agent ~~pertubant~~.
10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein said rapid removal of ~~pertubant~~ is by dilution.

11. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein said candidate compound is selected from the group consisting of protein, peptide derived from the HIV-1 Gag polyprotein and a non-peptide small molecule.

12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said monitoring of viral assembly is by a method selected from the group consisting of measuring turbidity, measuring fluorescence and physical separation of the polymerized viral protein.

13. (new) A method comprising the steps of:

providing a viral structure protein in a soluble form;

assembling said viral structure protein in the presence or absence of a compound of interest; and

comparing viral assembly in the presence of said compound to that in the absence of said compound, wherein said assembling is triggered by diluting said viral structure protein in a salt solution.

14. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein said viral structure protein is an HIV protein, and said viral assembly is an HIV assembly.

15. (new) The method of claim 14, wherein the compound inhibits or reduces the rate of assembly of said viral structure protein.

16. (new) The method of claim 14, wherein said viral structure protein is a capsid protein.

17. (new) The method of claim 14, wherein said salt solution includes NaCl.

18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein said NaCl is in a concentration of at least about 1 M.